

NO AIR COVER PLEGGED, CUBA INVADER SAYS

Brigade Chief Calls on
Bob Kennedy

BY ROBERT YOUNG

(Chicago Tribune Press Service)

Washington, Jan. 11 — A Cuban

leader of the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion said today the United States government had never promised his forces aircraft support to cover their landing.

Jose A. Perez San Roman, commander of the 2506th brigade of the Cuban liberation army, made this statement on the controversial question of air support after he and five comrades-in-arms paid a courtesy call on Atty. Gen. Robert F. Kennedy.

"We had our own planes, but they were knocked out," Perez told reporters after leaving Kennedy's office in the department of justice.

Captured in Invasion

Perez was one of the 1,113 prisoners captured in the ill-fated invasion of April, 1961, who were released just before Christmas after more than 20 months in the Castro government's prisons.

Atty. Gen. Kennedy helped arrange the deal for ransoming the Cuban captives in exchange for 53 million dollars worth of medical supplies and food and 2.9 million dollars in cash.

From a military standpoint, aircraft support was vital to the success of the attempt of the Cuban liberation army to invade Cuba and overthrow the regime of Premier Fidel Castro.

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Kennedy Is Silent

The question of support by American planes has been one of the most controversial in public discussion of the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion. There have been reports that at the last minute, President Kennedy withdrew the promised air cover recommended by his military advisers and, as a result, the Cuban invasion force was quickly pinned down and captured by Castro's defending forces.

Officially, the Kennedy administration has said nothing on the air support question. The White House and state department had no comment on Perez's statement today.

Perez, 32, said he and his liberation army group planned to leave Washington for New York City later today to confer with James B. Donovan, the lawyer representing the Cuban families committees who negotiated with Castro for the release of the prisoners.

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